



# PADUCAH URANIUM PLANT ASSET UTILIZATION TASK FORCE



McCracken County

City of Paducah

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 17, 2010

TO: Blue Ribbon Commission

FROM: Paducah Uranium Plant Asset Utilization Task Force (PUPAU)

RE: **Paducah/McCracken County Top Three Concerns/Issues**

Achieving energy independence from foreign oil is vital to both our country's security and our national economy. A key step in achieving energy independence is increasing the portion of the United States' electric power that comes from nuclear power plants above the current 20 percent. When a used fuel rod is removed from a nuclear power plant, only 5 percent of the material that produces the energy from the uranium atoms in the fuel rod has been used. Instead of burying the fuel rod, it makes both economic sense and common sense to recycle the uranium and use the potential energy in the remaining 95 percent of the material.

The process for siting interim spent fuel storage facilities must give the host community high confidence that safety will be assured, that all potential negative impacts of the facility will be addressed, and that the host community will be better off, overall. The community requests a guarantee that it would become home of a nuclear fuel rod recycling facility.

An approach emphasizing transparency, democracy, and fairness can help overcome the obstacles to gaining acceptance for siting interim storage facilities and fuel rod recycling facilities. In the past, nuclear decisions have often been made in secret, announced, and then imposed on affected communities over their objections-the so-called "decide, announce, defend" approach. This approach has proved, in most cases, to generate local opposition rather than support, and has contributed to a number of the recent failures to gain approval for siting nuclear and other facilities. Secrecy surrounding key decisions, in particular, while often justified by the desire to avoid exposing proposals to criticism prematurely, tends to breed mistrust and opposition. Communities want transparent access to all the important information they need about the proposed facility and the process of decision; a democratic process that will allow them to ensure that their concerns are fully addressed; and a process for choosing a site that is fair in its allocation of the burdens and benefits from nuclear energy and storage of spent fuel.